

Town of Hingham Special Town Meeting Articles March 3, 2008

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Article Number	Article Description	Action
<u>1</u>	Funding for the construction of a new school to be built on the former East School site (located on Collins Street).	Passed
<u>2</u>	This request seeks total funding of \$7,700,000 to implement the second phase of the School Facilities Master Plan previously approved by the Town.	Passed

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Plymouth, ss.

To the Constable of the Town of Hingham in the County of Plymouth,

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are hereby directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Hingham qualified to vote in Town affairs, to meet in the HIGH SCHOOL, 17 Union Street, in said Hingham, MONDAY, the THIRD day of March, 2008 at SEVEN o'clock in the evening, then and there to act on the following Articles:

ARTICLE 1. Will the Town raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the 2006 School Building Committee for professional fees, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new elementary school to be located at 0 Collins Street (Lot 1 on Assessors' Map 74), which school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least fifty (50) years, and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant not to exceed the lesser of (1) approximately forty (40%) percent of eligible, approved project costs or (2) the total maximum grant amount as determined by the Massachusetts School Building Authority under its non-entitlement discretionary grant program, with any project costs in excess of such grant to be the sole responsibility of the Town; or act on anything relating thereto?

COMMENT: Article 1 seeks funding for the construction of a new school to be built on the former East School site (located on Collins Street). Construction of this project, currently estimated to cost \$26,565,000, is contingent upon receiving financial assistance from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Currently, it is anticipated that Hingham will receive reimbursement of approximately 40% of approved costs from the MSBA to assist in the construction of this new school. The appropriation amount listed below is for the full cost of the new school, minus \$1,405,000 of design money previously appropriated at the 2006 Annual Town Meeting, as required by State law; the ultimate cost of the project to the Town will be reduced by the amount of the MSBA reimbursement.

The 2006 Annual Town Meeting unanimously approved the creation of the School Building Committee to implement the 10-year School Facilities Master Plan developed to provide a comprehensive solution to the overcrowding in the Town's elementary and middle schools. The School Facilities Master Plan was developed by the School Facility Study Committee, established at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting. An enrollment increase of 500 students over the last ten years has caused serious overcrowding at the K-8 level. Moreover, two independent demographic and enrollment studies concluded that enrollment is expected to increase by another 400 students over the next five years. Implementation of the Master Plan is critical to addressing this current and

growing problem, and successful implementation of the Master Plan can only be achieved by addressing the overcrowding problem at all levels.

The completion of the new school is the critical first step in Master Plan implementation, freeing space at the other elementary schools and enabling us to complete the necessary infrastructure improvements on those buildings. Together, completion of these projects will allow the Town's elementary schools to effectively absorb the recent and future enrollment growth, while maintaining the high quality of education Hingham has come to expect.

Upon final approval by the Town, including the required ballot vote, construction of the new school will commence as quickly as possible with a targeted completion to open in September 2009.

The amount appropriated under this Article, as well as the earlier appropriated design fees of \$1,405,000, will be funded through a debt exclusion under Proposition 2 1/2. The project will only go forward once the Town receives approval for the expected funding from the MSBA and executes a formal Project Funding Agreement with the MSBA.

On a home valued at the mean in Hingham (\$688,644), the Advisory Committee anticipates that the average annual tax impact will be approximately \$193 over the life of the 20 year bond for all projects proposed in Articles 1 and 2, i.e., the construction of the new school, Foster and Plymouth River improvements and modular classrooms at the Middle School. It is also anticipated that next year the School Committee will request an operational override for FY2010 in order to fund the cost of operating the new school. At this time, the Advisory Committee anticipates that the operational override request will be in the range of \$2.0 million to \$2.5 million. The average annual tax impact of an override in that range would be approximately \$240 to \$300 for a home valued at the mean in Hingham (\$688,644). More detailed information concerning the tax impact of the capital projects proposed in Articles 1 and 2 and the anticipated operational override will be presented at the Special Town Meeting.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Million One Hundred Sixty Thousand (\$25,160,000) Dollars for professional fees, constructing, equipping and furnishing a new elementary school at 0 Collins Street (Lot 1 on Assessors' Map 74), said sum to be expended under the direction of the 2006 School Building Committee, and to meet said appropriation, authorize the Town Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to borrow said sum under M.G.L. Chapter 44 and M.G.L. Chapter 70B, or any other enabling authority, upon such terms as the Town Treasurer and Board of Selectmen shall determine, provided that such school facility shall have an anticipated useful life as an educational facility for the instruction of school children of at least fifty (50) years, and for which the Town may be eligible for a school construction grant not to exceed the lesser of (1) approximately forty (40%) percent of eligible, approved project costs or (2) the total maximum grant amount as determined by the Massachusetts School Building Authority under its non-entitlement discretionary grant program, with any project costs in excess of such grant to be the sole responsibility of the Town, and provided that no construction contract shall be awarded for the new school until a Project Funding Agreement has been executed between the Massachusetts School Building Authority and the Town, and further provided that the appropriation hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

ARTICLE 2. Will the Town raise and appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds, a sum of money to be expended under the direction of the 2006 School Building Committee and/or School Committee for professional fees, repairing, improving, equipping and furnishing the Plymouth River Elementary and Foster Elementary schools and for the purchase and furnishing of modular classrooms for the Hingham Middle School; or act on anything relating thereto?

COMMENT: This request seeks total funding of \$7,700,000 to implement the second phase of the School Facilities Master Plan previously approved by the Town. Specifically, this article seeks approval to appropriate \$7,000,000, to be spent under the supervision of the School Building Committee, to improve the physical plant at Plymouth River and Foster elementary schools. The \$700,000 balance will be spent under the supervision of the School Committee to purchase five modular classrooms for the Hingham Middle School to provide an interim solution to overcrowding while we pursue a permanent solution with the MSBA. Together with the construction of the new school at the former East School location, as described in Article 1, completion of these projects will alleviate the overcrowding problem at the K-8 level.

Plymouth River School, constructed in 1968, and Foster School, constructed in 1951, will benefit from significant infrastructure and classroom improvements. These improvements will extend the life of our two oldest schools by at least 10 years, provide greater equity of resources among the elementary schools, and allow for the Town's limited capital funds to be used for other Town needs. The \$7,000,000, spent under the supervision of the School Building Committee, is expected to be split evenly between these two schools. Importantly, the \$7,000,000 request is a fixed amount and cannot be increased should renovation costs rise in the future. Since significant inflation continues to increase construction costs, it is in the Town's interests to begin these planned renovations as soon as possible.

The 2006 School Facilities Master Plan does call for an expanded capacity and substantial renovation of the middle school. A more permanent solution will still be needed and the School Committee and the School Building Committee continue to believe that obtaining state reimbursement for a middle school project is an important goal. However, based on the MSBA's current standards and timetables, the permanent solution is likely to be years away. The problem of overcrowding exists now and continues to grow, necessitating an interim solution. The installation of five modular classrooms provides an immediate and effective interim solution to the overcrowding at the Hingham Middle School.

Upon receipt of Town approval, including the required ballot vote, completion of the renovations to the two elementary schools will occur in two phases. The first phase will commence during the summer of 2008, and the second, the following summer, to ensure completion of all infrastructure and classroom improvements by the beginning of the 2009-10 school year. The installation of the five modular classrooms is planned for the summer of 2008 so that we can gain the benefits for the 2008-09 school year.

Article 2 requires a debt exclusion under Proposition 2 1/2, and it will not receive any reimbursement from the MSBA. The immediate tax implications of the approval of this debt exclusion article are described in the Comment on Article 1.

RECOMMENDED: That the Town appropriate (1) the sum of Seven Million (\$7,000,000) Dollars for professional fees, repairing, improving, equipping and furnishing the Plymouth River Elementary School and the Foster Elementary School, said sum to be expended under the direction of the 2006 School Building Committee, and (2) the sum of Seven Hundred Thousand (\$700,000) Dollars for the purchase and furnishing of modular classrooms for the Hingham Middle School, said sum to be expended under the direction of the School Committee, and to meet said appropriations authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to borrow said sums under M.G.L. Chapter 44, or any other enabling authority, upon such terms as the Treasurer and Board of Selectmen shall determine, provided that the appropriations hereunder shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

And you are hereby also directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Hingham qualified to vote in Town affairs to meet at two designated polling places in said Town of Hingham according to their precinct, to wit: Precinct 1, 2, 3, and 5: High School, 17 Union Street; Precincts

4 and 6: Middle School, 1103 Main Street on SATURDAY, the Eighth day of March 2008 at EIGHT O'CLOCK in the forenoon, then and there to give in their votes "Yes" or "No" on the following ballot questions:

1. Shall the Town of Hingham be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two-and-one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to design, construct, equip and furnish a new elementary school located at 0 Collins Street (Lot 1 on Assessors' Map 74)?
2. Shall the Town of Hingham be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two-and-one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued in order to design, repair, improve, equip and furnish the Plymouth River Elementary School and Foster Elementary School and to purchase and furnish modular classrooms for the Hingham Middle School?

The polls for the reception of ballots as aforesaid will be open at eight o'clock in the forenoon and remain open until eight o'clock in the evening.

And you are directed to serve this warrant by causing an attested copy thereof to be posted in the Town Hall fourteen days at least before the day appointed for said meeting.

Hereof fail not and make due return of this warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk on or before the thirteenth day of February 2008.

Given under our hands at Hingham this seventh day of February in the year of our lord two thousand eight.

Melissa A. Tully
John A. Riley
Laura A. Burns

A True Copy
Attest:

Kathleen A Peloquin
Constable of Hingham
February 7, 2008

By virtue of the within warrant I hereby certify that I have noticed and warned the inhabitants of the Town of Hingham, qualified to vote in town affairs to meet at the time and place indicated in the above warrant, by causing an attested copy thereof to be published in The Hingham Journal, fourteen days at least before the day appointed for said meeting. It was presented to and posted by the Town Clerk in the Town Hall on this date.

Kathleen A. Peloquin
Constable of Hingham
February 11, 2008